[James E. Shultz]

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Folk Stuff - Life on a Range Range lore

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Rangelore

Tarrant Co., Dist. #7 [48?]

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James T. Shultz, 74, living at 3813 S. [?] St., Fort Worth, Tex., was born on a farm at Falls Creek, in Llano co., Tex., Nov. 13, 1865. His father, [?] “Bud” Shultz, owned land and cultivated a small tract, also raised cattle. James T. Shultz began his range career working only during roundup periods, then, later, worked as a steady employee for the Duncan ranch. He witnessed a gun battle between two factions of cattlemen in the streets of Llano. He terminated his range career to engage in farming, which he continued to follow the major part of his active life. His story:

“My age is 74 and I have lived all of the years in the Lone Star State. I was born Nov. 13, 1865, on a farm located in Llano county. My father, James “Bud” Shultz, had settled on a tract of land in Llano county, on [?] Creek, near the [?] settlement. I was reared in that section of the country and spent the fore part of my life in that locality.

“My father did a little farming, raising corn, wheat and vegetables for consumption on the farm. He also raised some cotton for sale. Besides his farming, father ran a few cattle on the open range, which most everybody did in those days in that section.

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“The land he cultivated was fenced in, with split rails, to keep critters off of the field. The whole country was a cattle range, during the days of my early life, and the few small cultivated fields that existed were fenced against the cattle.

“There were some right pert ranches in the section, and many small grease-pot outfits. The Duncan outfit was about the largest ranch in the Llano county territory, with the Pullums, Harman [?] and John Burns ranches running up in the fair size outfits. C12 - 2/11/41 - Texas 2 “We lived sort of a rough life, one that was without fancy fixings, but we had plenty of good chuck and warm clothes. So far as meat was concerned, there was plenty of that at all times. Beef was on every hand; all we had to do was pick out a fat yearling, rope, and butcher it. Wild game was taken nearly as easily. Deer, antelope, wild turkey, and wild fowl of many kinds, were plentiful in that section, and in an hours time at hunting one could bring back wild game enough to last several days.

“Father raised vegetables, corn and wheat for the family needs, so food was not a matter to worry about. Out clothes were homemade and mother did the making, using cloth that father bought by the bolt. When one of us got rigged out with a new rigging we were as proud as a peacock and ready to go sally-hooting.

“[Wow?], the cattle business I learned as easily as I learned to waddle on my pine. The facts are that if a buckaroo wanted to go somewhere he had to walk or ride a critter, and the most likely animal to ride was a hoss or mule. If one started to drag somewhere on his hoofs, it would take so long to get there that a person was likely to forget what he went for. It was not as it is today, with houses in the country every fourth mile, or closer, and some burg or town every few miles. The distance between places in those days were from 5 to 16 miles. A neighbor five miles away was reckoned a near neighbor. For instance, not counting my grandfather Shultz, our nearest neighbor was the Duncan ranch, 15 miles away.

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“I learned to ride a hoss soon as I had a hankering to go places, and that was when I was around eight years old. When I 3 reached the age of 10, I could do a pert job of riding and handling the lariat.

“My first job with use for the rope was looping a yearling for beef to use in our home. Father told me to show him what kind of cowhand I'd make by bringing in a critter for beef. I was around 10 years old, and that request made me feel mighty important. I made good and brought in a nice fat critter of the yearling class, with the skin and innards removed, and the carcass slung across the horn of my saddle. After that job was done in a pert manner, father fixed me out with a single barrel, muzzle loading rifle, and I became the family huntsman when they hankered for wild game. I would ride out over the country to the location where the different kinds of game was, and in that way I learned to shoot. When I was 12 years old I could do a pert job of placing lead with my old muzzle loading rifle.

“One day, during my twelfth year, father fixed me up with a breech loading rifle and sent me out to cover the range, and among the mavericks were a number of old steers and bulls that could not be sold for beef because of their age; and, to clear the ranches of those critters, the ranchers would kill the critters when one was met up with. Those [mosey?] horns were a menace to the other cattle and there were several spied around our place. So I was called on to do the killing, and killed 15 in four days. The critters were skinned and the carcasses left for the buzzards and other wild critters. Some of those steers weighed 1,500 pounds, and their horns measured up to seven feet from tip to tip.

“The following year, I went to work for the [?] outfit 4 during the roundup, as an extra hand. All of the outfits in that section worked together during the roundup, working from one location to another until the whole section was worked. A part of the hands rode the range, gathering the cattle, and drove the animals to the roundup camp. At the camp, others

herded the cattle until they were worked and all unbranded stock was branded. Certain riders did the cutting out, while others handled the iron.

“The riders that did the cutting out were considered top hands and rode top hosses. Each cutter had a string of around 10 hosses and would change mounts about each hour, because cutting work was real tough on a hoss. With each critter looped the hoss was placed under a strain when it flopped the animal. The hoss would sit on it's haunches the moment the rope lit over the critter, to brace itself, and when the animal reached the end of the rope it would go into a spill; but the hoss would get a jar each time. The repeated strain, besides the running the hoss was put to, soon tuckered the best of hosses.

“I got a heap of joy watching the cutting out work and, in later years, always doing it myself, and was real pert at what I called the cutting sport, especially when straddled on a good cutting hoss.

“While thinking about cutting hosses, the job of training a hoss to do cutting work comes to my mind; and it is worth rattling about. Training a hoss was done by a rider looping a wild steer and then, with the saddle end of the rope tied to the horn of the saddle, the rider would leave the saddle, leaving the critter and hoss to fight it out. The hoss and steer would go round and round. 5 Of course the hoss wouldn't be set for the pull that the steer would give it and the hoss would go down. About the time the hoss got to it's feet, down it would go again. After the hoss received three or four such spills, it began to set itself for protection and would brace against the pull. It took about four of such deals for the hoss to learn it's lesson and get set the moment the rope left the rider's hands.

“After the calves and other unbranded critters had received the iron, that were running in one section, the critters were turned loose and the crew would move to another location.

“During all that spell of work we lived in the open, sleeping rolled up in our blankets and using the saddle for a pillow.

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“The cow outfits in that section worked together in a general way, doing about all the range work. There were riders from each of the outfits that rode the range at all times, looking after the herds, watching for injured, bogged and sick critters. When a rider found a critter that needed attention he gave it, regardless of whom the animal belonged to. There was a general watch for bunches of cattle that were straying too far; also, during a spell of bad weather when the critters began to drift for shelter, all hands sort of joined in, riding the country to drift the critters back that had dragged too far off.

“When a rancher wanted a bunch of critters for the market, his hands would have to cut the animals out from among the several brands that were running the range.

“There were two things that kept the ranchers with their weathered eye peeled, and that was for rustlers stealing cattle 6 and Indians stealing hosses and committing other depredations.

“The Indians hankered after hosses, and would sneak in whenever there was a chance, so we had to be constantly on the watch over our hosses. There was a spell of time in the 70's when the Indians raided homes, and it wasn't safe for the men folks to leave home unless there were others who could give protection.

“My grandfather Schultz had two rails on his place by the Indians. One time the Indians ran off two of his hosses, and the other time they stripped his cane patch. [?] the time the Indians took his hosses, he could have shot the redskins, but he thought it was a neighbor, Bill Arnold, until it was too late. Bill had a sick child at the time, and made many rides to grandfather's place for home remedies, which grandmother was pert about fixing. Also, he would use grandfather's hosses for a trip to town. Grandfather heard the riders, but thought it was the Arnolds, and didn't shoot when he could have killed the raiders easily. The following morning a party of [?] trailed the Indians and got one of them, but the hosses were gone.

“On the opposite side of Long Mountain, from where we lived, was the Whitlock family. The Indians came in there one night and killed all but two of the family, also burned the house. Word of the depredation was sent out, and the next morning a party of settlers lit out after the raiders. In the party were two of my uncles, Grandfather Shultz's sons, Bill Arnold, two [?] boys, father and I. We hunted that country for the Indians two days, and a little past noon of the second day we came upon a party of Indians asleep in the shade of a tree. Of course, we didn't 7 know that they were the depredators or not, but we didn't ask any questions. We branded the redskins for the eternal range and went home certain that those Indians would not raid any more homes.

“I recall a humorous incident that happened at Pack Saddle Mountain, which will give some idea of what the early settlers had to contend with. The wife of a settler was sitting before the fireplace of their home, moulding bullets. She had a ladle of hot lead ready to put into the bullet mould, when she heard a noise under the house. There was a crack in the floor where she was sitting, and into the crack she poured that hot lead. The sound of 'huh' with a painful expression came from under the house, followed by a noise that indicated someone was crawling out. The woman's husband reckoned that it was an Indian trying to fire the house. So he and his wife grabbed their rifles and ran outside, trusting to get a shot at the fellow. When they reached the outside, the two people saw a party of mounted Indians riding away.

“The rustler trouble reached a point in that section, at one time, when it was not safe for folks to talk about either side of the question. There was an organization of two factions - the 'pures' and 'rustlers'. The condition was so tense that one had to keep his trap closed or get branded, or be banned from the country.

“If a party received a notice to leave the country, from either side, such party had to leave the country pronto, within the time limit, or be willing to have his hide punctured and his friends put to the trouble of digging a little hole for him. The 8 territory included/ in the war section was Llano and Mills counties. In this section, there were several people who were

members of one or the other faction, who left the country hurriedly, and some who were not members. Some folks stayed, after getting a notice to leave, but were taken out of circulation as a reward for staying.

“One day, I was talking to a school teacher named Reed, a stranger who had come to the section to teach school. We happened to meet at the wages yard, and there were several other persons standing around when we were talking. During our talk, he gave his mind about the killings and said it ought to be stopped. The following Monday morning he was walking on a path going to his school and came to a piece of paper tied to a string, hanging to a pole that had been placed overhead across the path. On the paper was written the following message: 'Keep your trap shut'. He replaced the paper after writing, 'I am a stranger here and need advice, thanks'. After that incident, the teacher refused to talk about anything, except the weather, and was careful what he said about that.

“A man named [?] was telling a number of people, at the wagon yard, that he could put his hands on the parties who were mixed up in a certain killing. Within a week after that talk, while riding to where his son was fixing a cattle pen and when within 100 yards of the pen, his son heard a shot; looking up, he saw his father falling out of the saddle. The boy ran to his father and found him dead, with a bullet hole in his head.

“I witnessed a real battle between several members of a rustler faction, one day while in Llano. John Hartley was at the 9 head of one side and John Merit at the other side, in that battle. Most of the parties were related by marriage and had been working together. It seemed that some of the men were accused by the others of snitching.

“I was standing in front of the Jim Phillips' saloon talking to Jim, and he was telling me that he expected to see some excitement, because there were a crowd of about 25 men gunning for each other, and that if they got started hell would be popping. Just about the time he finished talking, we heard shots that sounded like a bunch of firecrackers exploding, and the fight was on.

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“In the next block from the saloon, one bunch was barricaded in an old shack; and the others were on the outside attacking, shooting from behind cover. Hartley's nephew started to run from behind a tree to cover closer to the shack and was killed by a bullet out of his uncle's gun. I said to Phillips, when the boy started to edge out from the tree, 'if that boy makes a move into the open, he will be branded sure as hell'. Sure enough, he hadn't made three steps until I saw Hartly step to the door and throw down on him and the first shot put the boy down, dead. Hartly was shot at and hit three times, while standing in the door making his shot at the boy, but none of the shot were center and he stepped back into the shack.

“That shack was just a box-board building and didn't give any protection to speak of, but just hid the boys from view so the attackers had to shoot at random. However, several of the boys who were barricaded got nicked. When the fighting had gone on 10 for about 30 minutes, it ended with one dead on each side, Hartly's nephew and Hartley himself, who received a center hit after stepping back into the shack. The fight stopped when the dead and wounded had reached a number which reduced the fighting force to two or three on each side, and those were anxious to call it quits so they could give attention to their wounded pals.

“Everybody stayed at a safe distance while the fighting was going on, but as soon as the firing stopped a crowd gathered around and gave aid to the wounded.

“That fight sort of cooled off the killings, and from that time on matters became more orderly.

“My last nesting place was on the Duncan outfit, where I was working when I quit the range to go to farming, which was in 1900.

“The Duncan outfit then ran around 4,000 head of cattle. Next to the Duncan outfit, was the 14,000 acre Franklin range. The Duncan and Franklin outfits were about the two largest outfits in that section, at that time.

“There was a tolerable lot change took place between the time when I first started to work on the range and when I quit. For one thing, the longhorn critters were being replaced by a different breed of animals. The white face Herefords began to show up on the range, ranges were being fenced, and mavericks were no more to be found. If cattle were stolen, the law handled the matter; and a person could say what was on his mind about rustlers, without getting a notice to drag out of the country.

“At the time I quit, I was married and living in a house on the range, which was a lot different from living behind a chuck 11 wagon. In fact, the life on the range had turned flip-flop; all that remained the same was the riding over the range, keeping an eye on the cattle, branding, and such routine work. The danger of stampedes was practically gone, because of the difference in cattle and the building of fences. The top hands were still to be found, which were the good riders, ropers and shots.

“The handiest man with a six-gun was John Branden, who worked for the Duncan outfit. Now John never took aim, but just cracked down. When he shot, he kept his eye on the object he was shooting at, and when the gun came to the right position it would fire. We often made [?] balls, the size of marbles, and threw three of those in the air at one time. He could bust the three balls before they hit the ground. He was, also, the best distance shot that I know of. That man could judge distance and knew the proper elevation to hold the gun better than any person that I ever met up with. Branden could put bullets into a target the size of a dollar, at 200 yards. For that matter, all the old rawhides were good shots.

“So far as riding was concerned, to be a cowhand one had to be a good rider. Certainly, there were some better than others, some who stood away out in front. Jim Moses was

one man who could do anything he pleased with a hoss. It seemed that a hoss knew that it had come to [?] when Moses got hold of the animal.

“Roping was my long suit; that I was tops in. The knack came to me naturally, and I had the feel and sense to get the lariat away just at the proper time, and put the correct force behind my throw. I am saying this about myself, but the same thing was said by other waddies. 12 “I have had waddies chase a critter at it's top speed and I could ride up and place the loop on either foot the boys would call for.

“We did a lot of shooting, roping, and riding, for practice. Some of the waddies spent more for ammunition then for any other item. Occasionally, we would have wild hoss contest. Two or more of us would start at the same time to snub, saddle and ride the hoss. The buckaroo that got his mount settled and returned to the pen first was, of course, the winner.

“A great deal of our time was spent in such doings; and what time we didn't spend that way, we were playing poker. I want to tell you that there were some darn good players among the old rawhides. I know that for a fact, which was indicated by the way my wages disappeared.

“Poker-playing and practicing the cowhand's art was about all we could do for pastime in the early days. After the settlers began to spot the country, we had a dance to attend once in a while. The ranchers would hold a dance for all the folks that wished to attend, which was the top event that took place. Hardly a soul would miss a dance, and would ride miles to attend. I have met up with folks at a dance that had ridden 40 or more miles to enjoy one of those old time dances.

“The tunes were 'Sallie Gooden', 'Hell among the Yearlings', and such other like tunes that the fiddler could agitate a fiddle to give forth. The gals and stags would stomp and prance till the early hours of the morning. When the hoedown ended, then the boys would start the trek home; possibly some would be the better 13 part of the day getting home. Some of

the folks would ride the better part of two days, coming and going, for five or six hours of dancing and sociablity.

“Naturally, the dance was where the buckaroos could meet the gals, and gals were at a premium, because the population run strong to stags. If a fellow got to sally-hooting a gal, he had to keep his eye peeled for hoss-play while at the dance.

“A fellow named Timnes was 'hooting' a gal, and we were all laying for him. At one of the dances, we watched for Timnes to come dragging in, and when he did we noticed a bulged saddlebag. We calculated it was a present for the gal, and waited for a chance to get at the package.

“He did as everyone did, that was to hang his gun on his saddlehorn and turn his hoss into the pen; and he left the package in the bag. Two of us waddies got busy with the package, while the rest of us engaged him with chinning while leading him to the house. The package was a box of candy, all fixed up pretty, tied with colored string. The boys removed the candy, and in it's place put some buffalo chips.

“After a spell, we saw Timnes hoofing it to the pen, and we knew he was going after the present because the gal was standing at the door waiting for him. We all scattered to different parts of the room, in places where we could watch out of the corners of our eyes. When Timnes returned, he handed the package to his gal. She thanked him and then went over where several of her gal pals were clustered in a chinning [?]. The gals immediately egged her on to open the package, and she did so. 14 “When the gals saw the contents of the package, some of them giggled, some turned and walked away, and some put on a poker face. Timnes's gal shot a dagger look at him, then turned and threw the package out of the window.

“Tinmes stood scratching his head, while trying to figure the play, and after a bit he walked over to where his gal stood and started to talk to her; but she wouldn't listen to him, and

walked away. He then went outside to look at the package, and when he saw it the whole play was disclosed to him.

“[?] was a humorous fellow and came back into the house laughing, instead of roaring as some thought he would. The candy was returned to him, and after an hour or so his gal was honeying around him as usual and everybody had a lot of fun over the incident.

“After I quit the range, I farmed until about 15 years [?]. The last few years, I worked in a rag rug factory. I quit that last month (Jun. 1938) because my eyes were not equal to the work.